

A project of this magnitude is certain to face a multitude of unknowns, and NASA has confronted many of them. As always in its courageous history, NASA has and will continue to overcome these obstacles and we will reap the rewards. Simply, the space station will maintain U.S. global leadership in space science and technology.

The unparalleled scientific research opportunities aboard the space station will enable advances in medicine and engineering. Most important are the health benefits that we have in the microgravity conditions in the space station. You cannot—no matter what technology you have—reproduce on Earth the gravity conditions that are in space. We know those microgravity conditions will allow us to watch the development of breast cancer cells and osteoporosis in a weightless environment. Perhaps this will help us find the cure for breast cancer, or we will learn how to combat osteoporosis.

The absence of gravity in the space station will allow new insights into human health and disease prevention and treatment, including heart, lung, and kidney function, cardiovascular disease, and immune system functions. The cool suit for Apollo missions now helps improve the quality of life of patients with multiple sclerosis. In recent years, NASA has obtained scientific data from space experiments that is five times more accurate than that on Earth. None of these benefits will be available in the future unless we have a space station on which we can perform adequate research.

Some will say that similar research can be conducted on the space shuttle. Although I believe valuable research should continue to be performed on the shuttle, the fact is, a longer period of time that can only occur on the space station is absolutely necessary for many important experiments.

During his last year in the Senate, Senator John Glenn spoke passionately in defense of the space station. He quoted a friend of mine, Dr. Michael DeBakey, chancellor and chairman of the surgery department at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX, who said:

The Space Station is not a luxury any more than a medical research center at Baylor College of Medicine is a luxury. Present technology on the Shuttle allows for stays of space of only about 2 weeks. We do not limit medical researchers to only a few hours in the laboratory and expect cures for cancer. We need much longer missions in space—in months to years—to obtain research results that may lead to the development of new knowledge and breakthroughs.

So you take all these scientific wonders and ask: How does it make my life better? It does make our lives better. It makes our health better. It gives patients who have multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, or cancer a better chance for a quality of life. I reject the idea that we would walk away from the space station and from the possibilities for the future for better health and better quality of life.

The international space station, along with the space shuttle program, is our future in one of the last unexplored regions of our universe. It will discover untold knowledge and could catapult us into a greater understanding of our world and, yet, undiscovered worlds. The space station will provide us with fantastic science, but that is only one of the known successes. The unknown successes are limitless.

Madam President, if we do not continue funding of the international space station at the anticipated cost levels, valuable experiments and progress will be abandoned. The project is long underway and, for the sake of future generations, we should not leave it unfinished. I look forward to working with the chairman and ranking member of this subcommittee to make sure we do fully fund the space station, but with strict requirements for budgetary control and making sure we do everything to keep our costs in line. But let's not walk away from this important research for our future.

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF JOHN NEGROPONTE TO BE THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I will speak for a few minutes about a problem that is hamstringing American foreign policy today, and that is the stalled nomination of John Negroponte to be the American Ambassador to the United Nations.

Even the critics of American foreign policy would agree that America, and the world, are best served by having an outstanding, experienced, professional diplomat at our U.N. mission in New York. Indeed, such a personal representative of the President would provide enlightened perspective to our friends and allies on occasions when we cannot support particular U.N. initiatives. He would also symbolize America's robust commitment to international engagement, and work with like-minded nations whenever possible

to advance our mutual interests and values, in the spirit of cooperation the United Nations was created to foster.

Regrettably, the Senate has stalled ambassador Negroponte's nomination process. The President announced his intention to nominate this 37-year veteran of the Foreign Service in March and sent his nomination to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in May. But his nomination has been held up due to concerns about human rights abuses in Honduras during his tenure as Ambassador there.

It is worth pointing out that Ambassador Negroponte has been confirmed by the Senate five times—as recently as 1993, well after his assignment to Honduras, as President Clinton's Ambassador to the Philippines. He did not then undergo anything like the ordeal he has been subjected to this year.

In the midst of the debate over Ambassador Negroponte's qualifications for the U.N. assignment, the United States got booted off the U.N. Human Rights Commission for the first time in its history—a defeat that raises credible doubts about the integrity of that institution and its commitment to the very values it exists to promote. Sudan, Libya, Syria, Cuba, and China are now members of this body, forged by the vision of Eleanor Roosevelt in the early post-World War II era—and we are not.

Victims of persecution around the world, and advocates for their cause in our country, shall long rue the day the Commission was tarnished by this unfortunate vote. Many professionals agree that had we had an ambassador in place early in this administration, we would now be a member in good standing of the Human Rights Commission. We also recently lost our seat on the International Narcotics Control Board, another avoidable consequence of our vacant U.N. ambassadorship.

Ambassador Negroponte has the strong support of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, his predecessor at the United Nations. Upon hearing the first reports of the President's intent to nominate Ambassador Negroponte, Ambassador Holbrooke said: The United States is lucky, the U.N. is lucky. . . . He is a real professional. . . . I would be thrilled.

Secretary of State Colin Powell recently called John Negroponte: one of the most distinguished foreign service officers and American public servants I have ever known.

The U.N. General Assembly convenes in mind-September for its annual session. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee should immediately schedule a confirmation hearing for Ambassador Negroponte, to take place in early September when the Senate reconvenes, in order to have him confirmed and in place to represent our Nation in New York this fall.

Ambassador Negroponte has served Democratic and Republican Presidents with distinction over the course of his diplomatic career. In the spirit of bipartisanship and the proud tradition of